Sharavathi on NH-17 at Honnavar has been deferred for the time being. Instead repairs to the existing bridge at a cost of Rs. 6.75 crores have been sanctioned and the State PWD have been advised to get the repaid works started immediately.

**Introduction of a modified Cargo suport Scheme**

5601. SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce a modified cargo support scheme;

(b) if so, the basic objectives of the scheme;

(c) whether the scheme is likely to result in earning and saving foreign exchange;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when the scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government have approved a Modified Cargo Support Scheme with the basic objective of providing, in a phased manner. 40 per cent of liner cargo in terms of value (freight) moving from/to India, to the Indian shipping lines.

(c) and (d) The share of the Indian lines in India's overseas liner trade for the year 1993-94 is about 13 per cent which is intended to be increased to 40 per cent. India's exports are projected to increase substantially in future and as it is, India is a net importer of sea transport services in its overseas trade with a huge outgo of freight payable to foreign flag operators, more particularly in liner trade. Overall, therefore, with the increase in the share of Indian ships, with effective implementation of the Modified Cargo Support Scheme, there are bound to be tremendous savings of foreign exchange for the country.

(e) The Indian National Shipowners' Association has been chosen as the nodal agency to coordinate through consitution of a Committee called the 'Committee on Liner Cargo Allocation' (COLCA) at the major ports with representatives from Indian shipping lines and shippers/Exporters Association for implementation of this Scheme. Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) and Indian National Shipowners' Association have reported that in a preliminary meeting held between SCI and Western India Shippers' Association at Bombay, the Shippers/Exporters generally assured to give full support to the Scheme.

**Improvement in the infrastructural facilities in ports**

5602. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that volume of traffic handled at the country's ports has increased at an annual rate of 5.3 per cent over the last four decades;

(b) whether it is also a fact that port infrastructure in the country is hardly capable of meeting the increasing traffic and calls for considerable improvement;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps being taken to upgrade these ports to meet the growing needs of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) The volume of cargo traffic handled by all the Major Ports in the country has increased at an annual compound rate of 6 per cent over the last four decades.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. The available port infrastructure is quite capable

of meeting the growing needs of the traffic. Nevertheless, an outlay of Rs. 2984 crores has been provided in 8th Five Year Plan 1992—97 for increasing the existing cargo handling capacity of the Major Ports to 237 million tonnes.

**Delinking of Vadinar Port from Kandla port limit**

5603. SHRIMATI ANANDIBEN JETHABHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gujarat Government has approached the Government of India to delink the Vadinar Port, excluding the Oil terminal, from the Kandla Port limit, so as to develop it as a State Port for handling dry cargo;

(b) whether Government would accede to the request of the State Government;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The request of the State Government has not been acceded to.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Due to the buoyant trend in oil traffic, the oil terminal at Vadinar is proposed to be expanded. The unutilised land area is required by the Kandla Port Trust for creating secondary facilties like godowns, oil storage towers etc., to cater to the increased traffic consequent to the expansion. Therefore, it is not possible to delink Vadinar from Kandla Port.

**Construction of contaner terminal at Vallarpadam**

5604. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

a) whether Government have taken any initiative to construct the container terminal at Vallarpadam of Cochin Port; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) Global offers from private parties were invited by Cochin Port for establishment of container Transhipment Terminal at Vallarpadam. The response received in this regard has not been adequate

**Woork on the National Highway No. 17**

5605. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether work on the NH—17 from Ponnani to Ernakulam has still not been completed; and

(b) if so, by when the work on NH—17 would be completed in the above area, especially from N. Parur to Ernakulam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Various sanctioned works of improvement from Ponnani to Ernakulam on NH-17 are in different stages of progress.

(b) It is too early to indicate the date of completion of the improvement works including the section between North Parur to Ernakulam on NH-17.

**Basic price of diesel and petrol for central road fund**

5606. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 5 per cent of the basic price of diesel and